

REMARKS

Applicants have amended the abstract and claims of this application to delete unnecessary reference numerals. Applicants have also changed the “means-plus-function” expressions in the claims in order to avoid the strictures on claim scope imposed under 35 USC 112, sixth paragraph. No new matter has been added,¹ nor has the claim scope been narrowed by these amendments. The version of the base claims used in these amendments conforms to the claims as amended before the International Bureau during the international phase by the amendment received April 8, 2004.

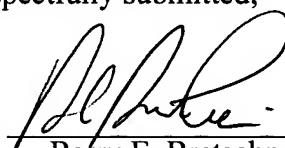
Early action allowing claims 1-14 and 16-19 is solicited.

In the event that the transmittal form is separated from this document and the Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief (such as payment of a fee under 37 CFR 1.17 (p)) is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing 245402011300.

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Respectfully submitted,

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¹ The deletion of the means-plus-function terminology does not introduce new matter because such “means” language in the Japan, where the international and original priority applications were filed, is interpreted to cover all structures capable of carrying out the recited function and not just those structures disclosed in the specification and their equivalents as they would be in the United States.